



## Verb types in English with examples

### Definition: What is a Verb?

Verbs take on the role of an action word in sentences and are a major part of any language, next to nouns. They tell us what the subject (that is, a noun or pronoun) is doing, and are thus indispensable. We could not convey meaning without verbs to tell us what is happening. In English, even the simplest sentences you can think of will have a verb (for example: “John runs.”) and some sentences can be created using only a single verb and nothing else, since the subject is implied (for example, “Eat!” “Go!” or “Drive!”)

Typically, we think of verbs as conveying action, that is, they are “doing” something in the sentence. But this can be misleading, since some verbs are not easily recognized as actions. Instead, they may express thoughts, states of being, emotions, opinions, or senses. Consider for example the verbs *am*, *feel*, *love*, *hope*, *think*, or *disagree*.

As you will see in this section, there are many types of verbs!

### How Can You Identify a Verb?

It's easy to identify verbs, often by examining its location in relation to a subject in a sentence. As a general pattern, verbs usually come after a noun or pronoun (we refer to these as the subject). Consider the following examples:

Maria **writes** beautiful letters.  
They **went** to the supermarket after lunch.

The giraffe **ran** across the savannah.  
The astronaut **thought** about her family every day.

Verbs are easy to identify if you just ask the right questions. Two great ways to do this are

- 1) Ask yourself “What is happening?”  
For example: is someone or something running, sitting, agreeing, voting, cooking, reading, jumping, thinking, and so on?
- 2) Consider the question, “Can I do \_\_\_\_\_?”  
For example: can I run, sit, agree, vote, cook, read, jump, think, and so on?

If the answer is yes, then you can say affirmatively that these are verbs.

### **Physical Verbs**

A physical verb is one that directly describes an action. This includes not only movements of the body but also the use of tools. It even applies to instances where something is being done but is not very visible or “active” in the usual sense.

Consider the following examples of physical verbs:

They **ran** to meet the ice cream truck down the street.  
Everyone I know **voted** in the last election.  
I **sat** in my favorite chair in front of the fireplace.  
Please **call** me sometime this weekend when you are free.  
Shall we **cook** some vegetables for dinner?

### **Mental Verbs**

Verbs that are referred to as mental verbs are used to convey cognitive states, such as thinking, planning, understanding, or discovering.

Consider the following examples of mental verbs:

I **think** I **know** who she is based on what you told me.  
Shanti always **believes** what people tell her, even when they are joking.  
Did he **recognize** you at the party last night?  
Angela **discovered** that the refrigerator was empty after the kids ate everything.

### **States of Being Verbs**

State of being verbs are used to describe a situation or set of conditions and are inactive because they do not refer to a specific action being performed. They usually employ forms of “to be” (am, is, are) and are sometimes also called linking verbs.

Consider the following examples of state of being verbs:

She **is** a professor of physics at the local university.  
They **are** world class athletes.  
This book **is** my favorite of all the ones in the library.  
The beach **is** beautiful today after the rain went away.

## Action Verbs

An action verb is used whenever you describe someone doing something, that is, to express an action. However, that action does not necessarily have to be something you can see or something that is physical.

Consider the following examples of action verbs:

She **reads** better than her brother.

My dog just **thinks** about food all day.

Jeremy **jumps** higher than he did last year.

The prime minister **entertained** foreign dignitaries.

## Stative Verbs

A stative verb is used when you want to describe a state, such as those related to emotions, thoughts, measurements, or the senses. One way to remember this is that they do not describe an action, but rather a state that may even be a temporary one.

Consider the following examples of stative verbs:

The teacher **disagreed** with Anna's statement.

→ "Disagree" is a stative verb here, since it describes the teacher's state of being, rather than an action.

I **believe** in the power of positive thinking.

Emily **doubts** that the package will arrive in time.

Would you **agree** that this is the best television series of all time?

## Irregular Verbs

Irregular verbs are verbs that take an unexpected spelling patterns in the past simple and past participle tense. Irregular verbs are actually fairly common in the English language, and you will encounter them frequently. We suggest taking some time to read through the list of [irregular verbs](#).